

Dear Members of The Select Committee on Children:

I am an 18-year old girl who supports S.B.153 "An Act Providing a Safe Harbor for Exploited Children." I was one of those kids: scared and lost with no control of my life. I use to run away from home with no place to go. I was looking for someone to love me, I became involved in prostitution. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I have been raped and beaten many times and I still have these memories that will be with me for the rest of my life. I was 14 years old; I did not try to tell anyone because I was scared; scared what they would do to me but also what the government thought of me. I never got arrested but I know many people that have been. It was hard to see girls I knew go to jail for something they had no control over. People think prostitution is control over your body but really, it is much more than that. I had people threaten me and force me to do things I did not want to do. I felt like if I did not do what they wanted me to do I would be seriously injured. I was lucky that I got help and had the courage to stand up for myself. It took many therapy sessions and treatment to move forward in my life. I just wish that everyone that goes through this can get the support that that they need rather than a jail sentence.

Thank you from your time

D.C.